

Mixology Monday (April 2007): Champagne Cocktails.



This month's [Mixology Monday](#) topic is "Champagne Cocktails", and once again I have chosen to use a cocktail creation of one of London, England's finest bartending sons, Dick Bradsell:

Russian Spring Punch (RSP).

According to Dick Bradsell, there was a party "...and all the guests were bringing Champagne, so I made a cocktail base of vodka, lemon, sugar and cassis on ice, and when the guests arrived, we just topped up the mix with their bubbly." Another version of this story states that there were very little ingredients available for Dick to concoct with, so out of necessity the RSP was born. Either way the RSP has proven to be one of the most popular drinks in modern British cocktail culture, and the drink most "improved" upon by every Tom, Dick, and Harry. The ingredients used to "improve" the original formula are: Muddled berries, fruit purees (usually berry flavours), different liqueurs (also usually berry flavours). Basically, the RSP is a drink that every bar manager wants on their cocktail menu, but none are prepared to stick on the default, original, Bradsellian masterpiece; No! it has to be their botch-up, overly-sweet version of the RSP; Sugary drinks sell more than drier cocktails, so that is what the public get served. And I think that is a shame.

Russian Spring Punch.

Created by Dick Bradsell.

25ml Vodka
25ml Fresh Lemon Juice
15ml Creme de Cassis (Blackcurrant Liqueur)
10ml Sugar Syrup

Shake with ice, and then strain into an ice-filled tall glass; Top with Sparkling wine; Garnish with a slice of lemon, and two raspberries.

TIP:

If you are making a long line of RSPs and you need to make them quickly, but the sparkling wine is foaming up too much, use Dick Bradsell's technique of

pouring a little more vodka onto the bubbles, so that the foamy head dissipates, allowing you to continue pouring the fizzy stuff.

French Spring Punch (FSP).

Mixing brandy, with champagne and strawberries is not new, Frank Meier did it in 1921, with his Royal Highball; But what is interesting about the FSP is that the nationality of the RSP was changed by Rudolph Sorrell to French, and so all of the ingredients had to become French also; The vodka was swapped for French Brandy, and the blackcurrant liqueur was swapped for Grand Marnier and Cointreau; And of course Champagne was specified as the bubbly to be used, rather than just "sparkling wine" as some people do.

The FSP was created in 2000, by Rudolph Sorrell; For some reason Rudolph had enlisted the assistance of Dick Bradsell to help him with restyling the RSP into a Frenchified libation. Even with the help of Mister Bradsell, Rudolph was unable to balance the drink well enough at the time, with the time in question being an inter-MATCH bar cocktail competition. Nobody present at the competition liked the drink that Rudolph presented, and more than that, people thought it was lame to just rip off the MATCH bar groups best selling drink and just make it into a French version. It wasn't the worst libation made that day, that "honour" belongs to the Kentucky Cream Tea, but I still remember it as being less than it could have been. If the FSP were called something completely un-"Spring Punch" related then I could respect it more, but tinkering around with a cocktail recipe so that it fits a particular name is a bit lame IMHO.

French Spring Punch.

Created by Rudolph Sorrell, 2000.

1 shot Cognac,
1 shot Fresh Lemon Juice.
1/4 shot Cointreau
1/4 shot Grand Marnier
1/4 shot Sugar Syrup
1/4 shot Strawberry Puree.

Shake with ice, and then strain into an ice-filled tall glass; Top with Champagne; Garnish with a slice of lemon and half a strawberry.

Not a Peach Spring Punch.

As you know I don't buy into just sticking words together because of that mixed drink's category and then just adding on the ingredient that differentiates it from the original; No, I like a nice name for people to remember, and then

they can associate it with the nice drink you made up to go with it. The Belladonna is a much more subtle drink than the RSP; We know that Peach and Sparkling Wine definitely works, so adding vodka and lemon juice for potency and freshness was a real no-brainer.

Belladonna.

Created by George Sinclair, 2005.

1 shot Vodka,
1 shot Fresh Lemon Juice,
1/2 shot Peach Puree,
1/4 shot Sugar Syrup.

Shake with ice, and then strain into an ice-filled tall glass; Top with Champagne; Garnish with a slice of Peach.

My other non-Spring Punch/ Spring Punch Variations.

Rattlesnake Shake
(vodka, lime juice, raspberry liqueur & puree, sugar, champagne)

Primavera
(tequila, lemon juice, strawberry liqueur & puree, champagne)

White Dragon
(gin, lemongrass syrup, lychee puree, lemon juice, champagne)

To read the other entries in this Month's Mixology Monday, click the link below:

<http://marriedwithdinner.com/archives/663>